

*The sure Foundation.*

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T W O  
DISCOURSES,

Preached before the  
University of O X F O R D,  
A P R I L II, 1756,  
IN THE  
Morning at St. M A R Y's,  
AND IN THE  
Afternoon at St. P E T E R's.

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By WILLIAM ROMAINE, M. A.  
*Lecturer of St. Dunstan's in the West, London.*

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Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold  
I lay in Zion for a Foundation, a Stone,  
a tried Stone, a precious corner Stone, a  
sure Foundation. He that believeth shall  
not make haste. *Isaiah xxviii. 16.*

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L O N D O N:

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I C O R. iii. II.

*Other foundation can no man lay,  
than that is laid, which is Jesus  
Christ.*

**I**N every undertaking it is the principal point to lay and to secure a good foundation. In temporal concerns all men see and acknowledge this truth, and are careful enough to act agreeably to it. The men of business, of pleasure, and of ambition, have each their foundation to build upon, from whence they promise themselves success. The learned also have their data, and first principles in every art and science, which are laid down as a sure foundation, whereon the art or science may be built. The christian in like manner has his foundation. Divinity has its first principle, with this manifest advantage above the arts and sciences, that God hath built it, and upon one plain simple truth, which is clearly ascertained both in the old testament and the new, Jesus Christ being proposed in both, as the only foundation of faith and obedience. This one sure foundation is laid, and no other

can be laid : *For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* What words can be more clear and decisive than these are, and yet the mistakes of men about them are endless, even of men who allow the divine authority of this very passage ? The papists have multiplied the one foundation into a great number, building upon the blessed Virgin, as much as they do upon the ever blessed God her Saviour, and upon a multitude of fabulous saints. And the Arians and Socinians, the pests of this age, have been trying to dig up the foundation, and would willingly leave no traces of it remaining. And some of the reformed churches, which set out well at first, laying Christ, and Christ alone for the foundation, have since built upon him, wood, hay, stubble, and such like reprobate stuff, which, when it comes to be tried in the fire will be burnt. And the generality of men have no foundation at all, but live careless and unconcerned about the state of their souls, never examining whether they are built upon Jesus Christ, the rock of ages, on whom the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord. Each of these mistakes has at present numerous advocates, some of them have great interest, and others have enjoyed a long establishment, and the espousers of each have something specious to offer  
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in its defence, which being dressed up with the ornaments of false learning, and falling in with our own corrupt inclinations, is very apt to seduce us from the foundation of truth. For these reasons it will be proper and seasonable to look to the foundation, and to see whether we stand secure upon it. In this enquiry the words of the text will be useful ; they are so plain and clear, as to leave no doubt in every honest teachable mind, which is willing to be determined by the authority of the written word, and hears and reads it under the guidance of its all-wise inspirer. *St. Paul* is here reproofing his *Corinthians* for the envying and strife, and divisions, which were among them. He had converted them to the faith, and *Apollos* had built them up in it, and they had great reason to join together in giving praise and glory to God, who had called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. But the common enemy of their souls prevented this desirable effect, by sowing discord between them. He tempted them into a party spirit, and they divided about the gifts and talents of their ministers. One said that he was of *Paul*, another that he was of *Apollos* ; and they forgot, that neither is *Paul* that planteth any thing, neither *Apollos* that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. All the glory of planting and watering, as well as of the increase

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is God's. For we, says the Apostle, are only labourers together with God. Altho' by our ministry the good seed was sown in your hearts, yet ye are God's husbandry. Although by our preaching ye were built up in your most holy faith, yet ye are God's building. We could do nothing without his grace: for according to the grace of God, which is given to me as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation. This wise master builder laid the foundation, when he converted them to christianity, and he cautions every minister of the gospel to take heed how he buildeth thereon, because there was but one foundation on which all doctrines and duties rested — *for other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid.* The foundation is the entire ground-work of religion, upon which every part of it must rest. The whole building is to stand upon it, and therefore it should be laid secure. Certainly it cannot be too strong and firm, which is to support our present and our eternal happiness. Look at this tempestuous world, and behold what rains descend, what floods come, what winds blow, and beat upon our weak tabernacle, threatening its fall, how can we stand against these mighty assaults, unless we be founded upon a rock? For our comfort God hath laid a foundation, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, and there-

therefore we need not doubt of its stability or duration. He laid it first in the covenant of grace, ordered in all things and sure, when he purposed before all worlds, to bring many sons unto glory through Jesus Christ. He afterwards revealed his purpose in the written word, and he hath therein laid but one foundation, and there is no other. *Moses* and the prophets have laid no other foundation in the old testament than what is established throughout the new, *which is Jesus Christ*, on whom we may safely build all our hopes of salvation, because he is God and man united in one Christ, who came as our representative to act and suffer for us, and thereby to restore us to the happy estate which we had forfeited by the fall. As man he obeyed the divine law to atone for our disobedience, as man he suffered what we should have suffered for disobeying; but then his obedience and sufferings could never have wrought out perfect righteousness for a guilty world, unless the holy suffering Jesus had been united to the most high God, and God and man had been as intimately united in one Christ, as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man. The merit of all that he did and suffered rests upon his being a divine as well as a human person. Take away his eternal self-existent Godhead, and you sink him down into a mere crea-

creature : And then place him ever so high, suppose him to be at the very top of the scale of creatures, yet you make him finite ; and being so, cloath him with every grace and perfection short of divine, he could save no person but himself, for it is an adjudged case upon record, *that no man can redeem his brother, or pay to God a ransom for him.*

The divinity then of Jesus Christ is the foundation on which the whole of our salvation rests : for there is salvation in none other, and if he be not true and very God, there is no salvation in him. Our preaching is vain, and your faith in him is also vain. We are all yet in our sins, for nothing short of divine and infinite can save us from the guilt and power of them. But the scripture has clearly revealed his divine and infinite nature. It has not left us in doubt concerning the power of the son of man to forgive sins. The Saviour of sinners was Jehovah, a person of the self-existent essence ; for we are taught by the christian verity to believe, that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons of equal glory and co-eternal majesty, father, son, and holy ghost, who were pleased to display their attributes and perfections, by sustaining distinct offices in the œconomy of man's redemption, to whom we therefore owe equal glory and worship, because their love to us in sustaining these offices for our recovery



recovery was equal. God the father was glorified by having honour paid to his holiness and justice. He demanded full and perfect satisfaction for sin, which God the son paid by taking upon him the human nature, and therein obeying and suffering for sinners: for which stupendous act of love and condescension, he was seated upon the throne, and had all power in heaven and earth committed to him, and he is now glorified by all the heavenly host, angels and archangels, and by the spirits of just men made perfect, thousands, thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, a great multitude whom no man can number. Glory be to his holy name, for that his courts will be filled with such an innumerable company, ascribing salvation to our God who sitteth on the throne and to the lamb for ever. And God the holy ghost is glorified for abiding with us, even unto the end of the world, to carry on the work of salvation, for awakening the dead in sin, enlightening them with the light of life, and guiding them in their christian course by his grace, until he bring them unto glory. Thus God the father demands satisfaction—God the son pays it—God the holy ghost applies it—but still in these offices the glory is equal, because the persons are equal. If the son was not equal to the father, how could he pay him an infinite satisfaction? If the holy ghost was not equal to the father and the son,

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how could he sustain his office, which requires an all-wise, all-present, and almighty spirit? These distinct offices make no difference or inequality between the persons, as it is well expressed in that form of sound words to which we have all subscribed, in the holy blessed and glorious trinity none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another, but the whole three persons are co-eternal together and co-equal. Jesus Christ is co-equal and co-eternal with the father and the holy spirit; and being a truly divine as well as an human person united in one favour, in this character every thing he did and suffered for us must be perfect and complete. Nothing can be wanting to make him a sure foundation. When he obeyed — when he suffered — when he died — he was paying the satisfaction demanded by the justice of the father, who demonstrated his acceptance of it by raising the manhood from the dead. And then the foundation of God was established immoveably. God himself, even God manifested in the flesh, is the foundation that standeth sure. It is neither the blessed virgin, nor the saints and martyrs; it is neither repentance nor good works; neither morality nor natural light, but the one foundation is the God-man, Christ Jesus. As God, he is almighty: for he created all things, and he upholdeth all things by the word of his power. As God manifested in the flesh he has engaged to use his almighty power  
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for our salvation. In his obedience and sufferings, death and resurrection, he laid a foundation that can never be shaken, upon which sinners may safely build their hopes of pardon and forgiveness, of righteousness and holiness, of heaven, and eternal glory. And they may build on him with greater safety, because the scripture throughout sets him forth as the only foundation. He is laid, and *other* foundation, the apostle says, can no man lay. There is an utter impossibility of laying any other: because to attempt it would be opposing the immutable decree of heaven, by which this one foundation was laid in the covenant of grace; it would be opposing God's revealed will, which has established this one foundation in the written word; and it would be opposing the merits of Christ's obedience and sufferings, by which alone we can obtain acceptance with God the father. Will not these men be found fighting against God, and how then can they succeed, who oppose his covenant, confirmed by his revealed will, and established by his miraculous works? So long as this scripture stands upon record, it will overthrow all their attempts to lay any other foundation. Will the metaphysician think of laying his reason and the light of nature? It is written, Jesus Christ is the foundation, and there is no other. Will the moralist think of laying a system of ethics, and the religion of nature? Jesus Christ is the foundation, and



there is no other. Will the Arian, Socinian, and other infidels think of being justified without the merits of the God-man? Jesus Christ is the foundation, and there is no other. In short, every doctrine and duty stands established upon him. He is the foundation of all: *for other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

The scope and design of the words thus in part opened and explained, offer to our consideration the following truths :

*First*, Jesus Christ is the foundation of all saving knowledge.

*Secondly*, He is the foundation of all acceptance with God the father.

*Thirdly*, He is the foundation of all holy obedience. And,

*Fourthly*, He is the foundation of all present and eternal happiness. And may the spirit of the Lord Jesus direct our hearts to make a right use of this scripture under the First Particular, which was to prove, That he is the foundation of all saving knowledge.

By saving knowledge I understand all the knowledge which respects the salvation of sinners. And man in his fallen state, neither has any of this knowledge, nor can he attain it by any means in his own power. His rea-  
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soning faculties in their highest refinement could never have discovered to him, how he might be pardoned: for when sin cut him off from all communion with the father of spirits, who is to the soul what the sun is to the body, it then deprived him of all spiritual discernment, and without the light of revelation he is unable to discover those objects, which can only be spiritually discerned. He is blind and ignorant in the things of God, and obstinate too in his ignorance. He is in the dark, and he loves darkness; and being a slave to the prince of the powers of darkness, he is taught to hate the light; and he hates it with a perfect hatred. He flies from it, lest his works should be manifest, and their horrid deformity should fill him with shame and painful conviction. While he is in this condition, and every man is in it by nature, the eyes of his understanding have no more perception of any spiritual object, than his bodily eyes would have of material objects, if there was no light to enlighten them. The organ of sight would remain, but then without light it would be of no more use than if it was quite destroyed. The scripture has given us a melancholy account of this spiritual darkness and blindness, and represents it to be so far above the power of nature to remove, that it was one principal end of Christ's coming from heaven, to preach recovery of sight to the blind. And to enable him to recover it, the spirit of the Lord was poured out up-  
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on him without measure : for it required the power of an almighty spirit to cure the obstinate blindness of a sinful world, who loved darkness rather than light. Read the first chapter of the *Romans*, and you will there find, what horrid deeds of darkness were, and always will be the fruits of nature, when left to its own fancied light. The apostle does not scruple to declare of the refined taste of this polite classical people, *that they were become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.* The imagination of their finest poets—even *Virgil's* imagination, *St. Paul* being judge, was vain. And *Tully* with his great parts, with his vast reading, and all his attainments, had a foolish heart, *St. Paul* being judge, and in the things of God was exceedingly dark. And this was true of the rest of the heathen world, as well as of the *Romans*. When *St. Paul* received his commission from Jesus Christ, it run in these words—" I send thee to the gentiles to " open their eyes, and to turn them from " darkness to light."— And accordingly we find it the principal subject of his preaching and writing, to call them out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel. His *Ephesians* he cautions (iv. 18.) " not to walk " as other gentiles in the vanity of their mind, " having the understanding darkened, being " alienated from the life of God through the " ignorance that is in them, because of the " blindness of their heart." And lest this darkness



darkness and blindness should be supposed to take place only in the heathen world, the scripture has expressly declared it is the case of every son of fallen *Adam*—of whom not one in his natural state can attain to the knowledge of saving truth, *for the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,* 1 Cor. ii. 14. And for want of this spiritual discernment, the apostle says, that the natural man, that is, every man in a state of nature, not only *does* not, but also *cannot*, there is an absolute impossibility that he should, know the things of the spirit of God. Nay, when they are proposed to him, they appear to be foolishness, and he receiveth them not.

But why need I multiply texts in defence of a truth, for which scripture speaks so plain, and matter of fact speaks for itself. It is an undoubted truth, that there was no saving knowledge in the heathen world. We therefore call it heathen, because it wanted this christian knowledge. What discoveries did the classical ages of *Greece* and *Rome* make in the doctrines of salvation? Rather, what had they not done to obliterate the scope and intent of the ceremonies, which God had instituted to keep up the knowledge of these doctrines? The very traces of them were so entirely lost, that among the numerous altars in the famous university of *Athens*,  
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there was but one erected to any thing like divinity, and that was to *an unknown God*. St. *Paul* made an excellent use of this inscription, taking occasion from it to preach christianity to the *Athenians*, and assuring them, that this God confessedly unknown was Jesus Christ: and if a faith in him, that purifies the heart, and that works in an holy life, be the basis of saving knowledge, then neither *Greeks* nor *Romans* had any of it: for in none of their authors do we find the least mention made of the nature, virtue, and efficacy of the purifying faith in Jesus Christ.

And this matter of fact is confirmed by every day's experience. Are we not forced to teach children the first rudiments of letters, and as their minds open, the first rudiments of saving knowledge? Is not a christian education every where acknowledged to be necessary, as well to restrain and subdue the headstrong passions of corrupt nature, as to instil the wholesome truths of christian faith and obedience. And are there not in every country, schools and universities founded for these laudable purposes? And when we leave these places of education, does not every good steward of the mysteries of God still find the necessity of continual study and application to the written word, that he may be able out of his treasure to bring forth things new and old for his own and his peoples instruction in righteousness; and these circumstances may convince

convince us, that we are naturally blind and ignorant in the saving truths of the gospel. We know only as much as we are taught. Without the light of revelation, the inhabitants of *England* would be no wiser in the things of God, than the inhabitants of the deserts of *Africa*—the same spiritual darkness would cover both lands, the same gross darkness the people. And whether they be polite or savage it makes no difference, until the sun of righteousness arise to dispel their heavy night of ignorance: For what the sun is to the natural world, such is Jesus Christ the sun of righteousness to the spiritual world. The scripture hath set him forth as the only light of the spirits of men, from whom all saving knowledge must flow: For he was made unto us wisdom, says the apostle. In his divine nature wisdom, perfect and infinite wisdom is essentially inherent. He is the all-wise God, in whom are stored all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which he was pleased, as our Saviour, to open for our use and to communicate. The word of God most high is the fountain of wisdom, from whom by the covenant of grace it was to flow; and ever since the fall it has been flowing in the richest streams. And from him every sinner must be enlightened before he can enter into the light of life: For he said of himself, *I am the light of the world*, and he must fulfil his word by enlightening every

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dark benighted soul, until the number of the elect, the children of light, shall be perfected, and then he will shine for ever in the fulness of glory in the heavenly *Jerusalem*: For the glory of God shall lighten it, and the lamb is the light thereof, and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in his light for ever and ever. Thus the light has been and always will be the glorious title of the incarnate God. He took this name to denote his gracious office of enlightening our blind and dark understandings. Under this character the prophet *Isaiah* speaks of him (ix. 2.) *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.* These words are applied to Christ by an infallible interpreter. St. *Matthew* makes them relate to Christ's being a light to lighten the gentiles. And again in the same prophet, the Lord saith (xlix. 6.) *It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, I will also give thee for a light to the gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth.* Paul and *Barnabas* (*Acts* xiii. 47.) apply these words to Christ: He was the true light, the day-spring from on high that visited the gentiles, to give them the knowledge of salvation; for if the eyes of them who sit in darkness and the shadow of death be ever opened,

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if they see that they have lost the way to heaven, if they desire to walk in it, and are enabled to go on stedfastly unto the end, all this is the work of that divine light, in whom whosoever believeth shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

From these scriptures it is evident, that every man who cometh into the world is by nature dark and blind in the things of God. Sin blinded his eyes, and left him without the least spiritual discernment. The intellectual faculty indeed is not totally destroyed. The organ of sight is not annihilated. It remains, but not enlightened. It is in the same state our eyes would be, if the sun, moon, and stars were to withhold their shining, and not one ray of light was left in the creation. If men could live in this gross darkness, the organ of sight would not be destroyed, but it would be quite useless. All things would be invisible, because whatsoever doth make manifest is light. And this is the state of the soul: For the eye of the soul can no more see without its proper light, than the eye of the body can see without its proper light. And what the sun is to the body, that is Christ to the soul. He is the light of the world, not of this outward world, which is abundantly supplied from the fountain of created light; but he is the light of the spiritual world, which lay in darkness and the shadow of death, until he arose with healing

under his wings, and brought with him from heaven the reviving light of life.

Upon the authority of God's word these truths are established. The evidence for them is clear and full. If our bodily eyes cannot see without light, it is equally certain, that our spiritual eyes cannot see without Christ : because both are spoken of in the same language, and under the same expressions. And as he is the Lord God omnipotent, he is certainly able to enlighten the darkest soul ; and as he is God incarnate, he is engaged to do it. He will use his almighty power, and if he give the word, Let there be light, there will be light. Upon the strength of this evidence we must believe, that it is the name, and the office, and the glory of Jesus Christ, to be the light of the faithful through this dark wilderness of sin and sorrow.

Convinced of this, there is an important enquiry to be made, without which our conviction will be of no use, and that is, Have we reduced it to practice ? Since Christ is the foundation of all saving truth, have we been led to seek it from him, and him only ? In our studies of divine learning do we always read the scripture with humility and prayer, desiring in the royal *Psalms* words, which are devout and short, and which contain an excellent prayer always to be used before we open a bible, *Lord open thou mine eyes, that I*  
*may*



*may see wondrous things in thy law.* And in our studies of human learning have we taken Christ for a light to guide us and to bless us, that we might attain more understanding than the aged. Rather have we not robbed the eternal light of his name, and office and glory, by seeking saving truth from the light of nature? If God be true, and the scriptures which I have read be his word—nature is dark and blind. To talk of the light of fallen nature, and all nature is fallen, is more absurd than to talk of the darkness of light. There cannot be a more wicked contradiction to God and his word, to experience and matter of fact, than for men professing christianity to talk about the light of sinful dark and blind nature: Neither can there be a greater insult offered to the incarnate God, than to seek that light which he was made incarnate on purpose to give, from metaphysics, or any science, that pretends to manifest spiritual objects without revelation: Neither can there be a greater crime, than to think of seeing and reasoning *à priori*, because this is God's incommunicable attribute, of which he is so jealous, that for pretending to it we were all cast out of paradise. In honour then to the God whom we worship, and out of love to our own souls, let us talk no more of the light of fallen nature; let us degrade the unnatural science of metaphysics, and forget all abstracted reasoning; they can give us no light  
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in the things of God, but what is borrowed, and it is fainter than the faintest stars; and were they brighter than they are, yet when the sun arises, his superior lustre hides their pale and glimmering rays. God be praised the sun of righteousness has arisen among us in perfect beauty, and false science is hiding her head. He shines with his noon-day glory upon this highly-favoured church. Long may he shine unrivalled by any fancied light of fallen nature. And may his brightest beams enlighten this university, that every member of it guided by his word and spirit, may receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

If it should be enquired, in what manner Christ enlightens the spirits of men, whether it be in some certain regular way, or he has left no sure direction in this case: The answer is, God has established the means of grace for this very purpose, of which his word is the principal: *For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light*: And when his good spirit accompanies the hearing or reading of the word, then it is indeed a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our paths. Then the word discovers to us the wretched darkness of our natural state, strips reason of all its high and divine titles, and thereby humbles us before God, and brings us low before his footstool, waiting upon him in all  
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the means of grace, and particularly in prayer, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may shine into our dark and sinful hearts. To expect this light without the use of the instituted means is enthusiasm; and to expect to keep this light, after you once have it, without continuing in the use of these means, is the very madness of enthusiasm. In them God has promised to be found of those that seek him. Out of them you have no promise; and you may as reasonably hope God will create a new light for you to read by in the night, as that he will enlighten you without the established means, without prayer, and the word and sacraments. And therefore whenever you are tempted to entertain such hopes, be assured it is a delusion of the devil's, and beware at the peril of your souls, lest the light which you suppose to be in you be darkness: For remember it is written, *We be unto them, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness.* In order to keep clear of this wo, let us wait in the use of the appointed means, and then we may with truth and soberness expect, that Christ will enlighten us with all saving truth, and particularly with a full and practical conviction of that great truth, which I proposed to consider in the second place, *viz.* That Jesus Christ is the foundation of all acceptance with God the father.

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The same sinfulness, which darkened the faculties of the soul, and separated us from God, stirred up his holiness and justice and truth against us. Against these attributes we had sinned, and they were become our enemies, and until they received full satisfaction God the father would not accept us. He declared under the law that he would accept nothing in atonement but what was perfect, and perfection is not in the sinner. The sacrifices were to be without blemish. This was the standing rule—"Whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer, for it shall not be acceptable for you—and whosoever offereth a peace-offering or a free-will offering, it shall be perfect, to be accepted, there shall be no blemish therein." (*Lev. xxii. 20, 21.*) This was both to shadow out the absolute perfection of our holy, harmless, and undefiled high priest, who should by the one offering of himself make a perfect satisfaction for sin, and also to convince the sinner of his utter inability to make any satisfaction: For the sinfulness of his nature, and the sinfulness of his life would render every thing he could do imperfect and sinful, until he should be accepted in the beloved.

Men are not much affected with the sinfulness of their nature until Christ enlighten them. Sin which first blinded their eyes, by its deceitfulness keeps them blinded. And although the fountain of iniquity, the corrupt heart within, is always sending out filthy streams,

streams, yet it gives them little uneasiness until the divine light break in, and lay open to view its impurity. Then the sinner finds and confesses, that he is by nature a child of wrath. He freely subscribes to the scripture account of the corruption of mankind, as it is described by *Moses* and the prophets, and expressly treated of in the 14th and 53d *Psalms*, upon which St. *Paul* has given us a comment in the 3d chapter of the *Romans*, and he sums it up in these emphatical words: *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*

If any doubt should remain concerning the meaning of these scriptures, our church has removed it in her 9th article, where she determines, that “ original sin standeth not in  
 “ the following of *Adam* (as the *Pelagians*  
 “ do vainly talk) but it is the fault and cor-  
 “ ruption of the nature of every man, that  
 “ naturally is engendered of the offspring of  
 “ *Adam*, whereby man is very far gone from  
 “ original righteousness, and is of his own  
 “ nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh  
 “ lusteth always contrary to the spirit, and  
 “ therefore in every person born into the  
 “ world it deserveth God’s wrath and dam-  
 “ nation.” This is a truly scriptural account of man’s sinful and guilty state by nature, to which add the sinfulness of his life, and you separate him still farther from God: For what man is he that liveth and sinneth not. And sin is the transgression of the law—and

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the law is holy, just, and good—it is so pure and spiritual, that it cannot overlook the least offence. It must have perfect unerring obedience in thought word and deed, or it puts the offender under the curse: for it is written, *Cursed is every one, who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.* You must continue (without intermission) in all things (not keeping nine commandments and breaking the tenth, not keeping them all outwardly, and breaking them in thought) *that are written in the book of the law to do them*; not only to purpose well, and to make good resolutions, but you must also do and execute them, or the law can shew you no mercy. And which of us has kept the law in this perfect manner? Who can say, that he never offended in thought, word, or deed? Certainly every mouth must be stopt, and all the world must plead guilty before that righteous judge, who trieth the very hearts and reins.

Now God has already past the decree against a sinful nature and against a sinful life—*The soul that sinneth it shall die.* God is faithful and just to fulfil his decrees—he is almighty to execute them—and what can man do under a state of guilt and condemnation to reverse them? Two things are requisite, each of which are as much out of his power as to create a world. He must first change his own nature, which is like the *Ethiopian's* changing



changing his skin, and he must be renewed in the spirit of his mind with every sweet and holy temper. And then this change wrought by himself must make a full satisfaction to the holiness of God for his past pollution, to the justice of God for the violation of his laws, and to the truth of God, that he may be true, and yet remit the threatened punishment. But alas! man has neither will nor power to change his nature: Who can say, I have made my heart clean—I am pure from my sin? No man can truly say, I have done it: for it is God's work. To create a clean heart is as great an act as to create the heart at first; and accordingly we find the prophet praying to God for it—*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.* And until God create a clean heart, how can any thing clean proceed from it? Who in an impure nature can do a pure action? Who under the curse of the law, and under the sentence of condemnation, can perform a meritorious service? Who by his own works can attain such perfect unspotted righteousness, that God the father will accept him in virtue of it? The scripture hath determined, that there is none righteous, no not one, and that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified; and our church has determined the same in her articles and homilies, affirming that we are accounted righteous before God, *only* for the merit of our Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ, and not for our own works or deservings.

A great part of the mistakes in religion arise from men's not attending to these truths. They have not a deep conviction of their lost estate by nature, which occasions their not seeing in its proper light the necessity of their recovery by grace. The malady of a sinful heart is not painful enough to make them apply to the sovereign physician: Nor is the burden of a sinful life heavy enough to persuade them to seek the comfort of this scripture—*Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* But when conscience alarms them, when guilt terrifies, and they read the sentence of condemnation past upon them in the law, then helpless and miserable in themselves, with transports of joy will they receive the glad tidings of the gospel, which discovers to them how they may be reconciled to an offended God. To such persons, whose eyes the Lord has opened to see their guilt and their misery, the gospel sets forth Jesus Christ as the sole foundation of their acceptance. We are said *to be accepted in the beloved*; who came in our nature to work out that perfect righteousness for us, which infinite holiness and justice and truth required, and which we could not by our own power attain; but by the merits of his obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection, he is able to cloath us with  
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the immaculate robe of his righteousness, in which we shall be presented before God the father without spot of sin unto salvation.

It must be always remembered, that our Saviour was God and man united in one Christ; by which union whatever he did and suffered for us became truly divine and infinite. Jesus shed his blood, and the scripture says it was the blood of God. Jesus died for us, and the scripture says, that God laid down his life. In what sense can these expressions be understood, unless the Godhead and manhood were united in one person? This fundamental doctrine of God's being in Christ reconciling the world unto himself must never be forgotten, when we are speaking of the merits of Christ's actions and sufferings. Our nature was impure and corrupt, the imaginations of our hearts were only evil continually. Christ came in a pure spotless nature, separate from sinners, that whatever he did for them might appear without blemish before God the father. He began his ministry with resisting the devil, and all his temptations, to atone for our yielding to them; for us he conquered, and from his conquest grace is derived to the faithful to resist all his temptations. Then he obeyed the law; its purity, its spirituality, its extensiveness, could find no transgression in thought, word, or deed. Its highest demands were answered: for according to its utmost rigour,  
*be*



*be continued in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.* And thus he redeemed us from the curse of the law, and as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Then he humbled himself to suffer what we ought to have suffered for our disobedience. The holy innocent Jesus bore our griefs and carried our sorrows throughout the scene of his bitter passion. See him on the eve of the crucifixion in the garden, alone, prostrate upon the cold ground, in an extreme sharp night, and lo ! at the sight of that load, which he was going to take upon him, a præternatural sweat flows through his raiment, and falls to the ground in great drops. Oh cursed sin ! with what an holy hatred ought we to crucify thee, since the prospect only of the number, and guilt of our sins, and the wrath and vengeance of the father due to them, forced our blessed Lord to sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. Being apprehended, he came as a free ready victim to bear those sufferings, of which we cannot form a perfect idea at present, and unless the vengeance of a justly offended God should hereafter pour the vials of his wrath upon our guilty heads, we shall never know them. God grant, that Christ may have endured them for every one of us. The outward part of his passion was but a faint picture of what he endured, when the chastisement

chastisement of our peace was laid upon him; and yet of the outward part he might truly say, *Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by, Behold and see if ever there was any sorrow like unto my sorrow, &c.* The shame that ought to cover all our faces he endured; for us the guilty, and shameless in guilt if by continuing in sin we put him again to an open shame, he was despised and rejected of men, he was mocked and derided and spit upon, buffeted and scourged, crowned with thorns and blindfolded, falsely accused, and falsely condemned. Then behold him bearing his cross. When we see him fainting and sinking under the load, and his face and raiment covered with blood, does it not bring to mind what he says of himself in the book of *Psalms*? *The ploughers ploughed upon my back and made long furrows*—they ploughed up his back with the long and deep wounds of their stripes and scourges; but by these stripes we were healed. Nay he says more in another *Psalms*, that he was so wounded from head to foot, *there was no whole part in his body*: And you cannot doubt of it, if you raise your eyes to the cross, and see the suffering bleeding lamb of God in the last scene of his passion. And yet this was the least part of his sufferings. “ Give me  
 “ any grief (says the wise man) but the grief  
 “ of the mind, for a wounded spirit who can  
 “ bear?” Who indeed can bear a spirit  
 wounded

wounded of God? When Jesus was in the garden, his soul was exceeding sorrowful, was in an agony, even unto death; but these were only the beginning of sorrows. When he took upon him the iniquities of us all, and almighty justice finding them upon him demanded full satisfaction, and received it to the uttermost farthing, then he had a wounded spirit such as all the men upon earth, no not all the holy angels in heaven could have sustained for a moment. He bore it for six hours hanging upon the cursed tree, until all was finished; then he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. And thus he was made sin for us, and suffered for our sins, who knew no sin himself, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him: And he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, and tasted death for every man. He died, to save our souls and bodies from the power of death. And he rose again, that we might receive justification to life, that our souls might arise here from the grave of sin, and that our bodies might in God's good time arise from the grave of death, and both of them united in a glorified state might receive eternal life as the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And being thus made perfect through obeying and suffering, through death and resurrection he became the author of eternal salvation. He wrought out such perfect righteousness



teousness to be imputed unto sinners, that he is now able to save them to the uttermost. He has the infinite merit of his obedience to atone for their disobedience. He has the infinite merit of his sufferings to free them from suffering. He died, to save them from the first and the second death. He rose again, that they might rise to a newness of life here in grace, and to life everlasting in glory. And he is now the one mediator between God and man, able and willing to plead the fulness of his merits for the acceptance of every sinner, who comes unto God the father through him. From

Hence it follows, That Jesus Christ is the foundation of our acceptance. If God the father ever receive us as just and righteous, it must be in the perfect righteousness of his son. We must be accepted in the beloved; in whom the father was well pleased, and through whom he will be well pleased with us. The passages before cited clearly prove, that this is the doctrine of all scripture. The *Psalmist* has given us the sentiments of the old testament worthies — *I will go in the strength of the Lord God—I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.* And God forbid, that we under the new testament should make mention of any other. Shall we go about to establish our own righteousness, in opposition to the righteousness of God? Or shall we, under the guilt of original and  

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actual sin, think of working out any righteousness for which we shall be accepted in part or altogether? If we could, then Christ obeyed and suffered in vain. If we could attain saving knowledge by the light of nature, and could act agreeably to it by the law of nature, then of what use would be the light and law of the gospel? But nature has no light, it is dark and blind in the things of God, and what can its law be, that is discovered by a dark and blind nature, but darkness and blindness? Nay, it is something worse. If fallen nature has any law, it is the law of the members, which warreth against the law of God, and bringeth a man into captivity to the law of sin. This is the only law of nature to be met with in the word of God: for nature is fallen and corrupt; it is depraved in the will and affections, as well as ignorant in the understanding. It is always inclined and prone to evil; *for the flesh* (which stands in scripture for the fallen depraved affections of the natural man) *lusteth always against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary the one to the other*—the will of the natural man is always contrary to the will of God; from hence it follows, that what is called the religion of nature, is contrary to the religion of God: because nature used with religion confines it to man's nature, no other nature being concerned in the question; and man's nature is fallen and corrupt, sinful in the fountain,

tain, and sinful in the streams, and what then can the religion be, which this nature is able to discover and to practice? Certainly it must be a blind and corrupt religion. Jesus Christ makes no part of it. He is not the foundation upon which it stands. The finest system of the religion of nature that ever was delineated builds nothing upon him, and since there is no other foundation but him, consequently it stands upon nothing. And if the heart was not corrupt as well as blind, it would be unaccountable what should tempt men with the pure word of God in their hands, which is able to make them wise unto salvation, to neglect it, and to write and read and study those antichristian systems, which can teach no wisdom, but what is earthly, sensual, devilish.

Men and brethren, be not offended; it behoves me to use great plainness of speech. If I was to speak smooth things, and to give flattering titles to the religion of nature, I should not be the servant of Christ: For this religion was set up, and has been used to hurt his interest, and when we see it has succeeded, surely it is high time for those servants, who love their master's praise more than the praise of men, to set themselves strenuously against it. Happy will it be for this place, if the noble company of his servants should increase, until the religion of nature has not one admirer left.



Jesus Christ will be exalted among you in proportion as the religion of nature falls in esteem: And he has promised, *them that honour me, I will honour*. Honour Jesus Christ, and exalt him above all, and then his highest honours shall descend upon this university, and he will make her very enemies to be at peace with her. Oh for that happy day, when the honour that is of God shall be sought after as the crown and reward of all your studies. And why need we doubt of it? We have an earnest before our eyes. Do we not see the religion of nature losing its interest every day? Do not men begin to be afraid of trusting the vast concerns of eternity upon it? And have they not good reason? For has it not appeared from what has been said, that its first principles are antichristian? They suppose man's natural faculties to be able to investigate the things of God—Scripture absolutely denies it. They suppose he has will and power to act agreeably to the will of God—Scripture absolutely denies, that he has either will or power. They suppose, that by practising the duties of natural religion you may altogether or in part render yourselves acceptable to God—Scripture absolutely denies this, declaring that there is no other foundation of acceptance, but Jesus Christ. And besides, the religion of nature manifestly tends to rob the God of our salvation of his glory, and to lessen the merits of his righteousness,

teousness, as much as the scripture tends to exalt both. And both are exalted, wherever the scripture is received pure and unmixed with human systems, and we have melancholy experience of the contempt offered to both, wherever the religion of nature is embraced. The doctrine of the ever-blessed trinity, on which all scripture stands, makes no part of this religion. So that the religion of the bible and the religion of nature have different objects of worship. The christian worships one God in trinity, and trinity in unity ; but this is rank idolatry with the natural man, who adores one supreme being, a metaphysical divinity, existing in one person, with certain imaginary attributes, such as infinitely extended, filling all space, &c.—Hence he explodes the divinity of Jesus Christ—Hence he despises the authority of his laws—Hence that dissoluteness of morals throughout the kingdom, which all men see, and even the professors of natural religion confess. Would to God they were convinced, what a great share they have in it, and how much of it they have to answer for. It would be for their present and eternal peace, if instead of maintaining and teaching this unscriptural religion, which is the sink of heresy and corruption, they would join their hearts and hands in exalting the religion of Jesus Christ, and his infallible word, wherein that religion is contained, and in labouring to

to bring the lives as well as the opinions of men into obedience to it. How highly it is incumbent upon you, my brethren, to promote this much-desired reformation, I need not farther urge at present, than by reminding you of a very awful truth, to which we have all set our hands, and may God set our hearts to act agreeably to it. What I mean is the 18th article of our church, wherein we have declared, “ They also are to be had  
 “ accursed, that presume to say, that every  
 “ man shall be saved by the law or sect which  
 “ he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame  
 “ his life according to that law, and the light  
 “ of nature. For holy scripture doth set out  
 “ unto us only the name of Jesus Christ,  
 “ whereby men must be saved.” In this article we have given in our public testimony before God and his church against the light and the law of nature, and with our own mouths have put both of them under the curse. And shall we with the same mouths afterwards preach up the light and law of nature, and pronounce them blessed? God forbid. I hope his good spirit will keep us free from this monstrous guilt, and enable us in all our preaching to set forth only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved.

But it may be here enquired, if man in a state of nature be at enmity with God, and can be accepted only through Jesus Christ, by what means shall he seek this reconciliation?



tion? The scripture has given us this plain and easy method. God the father accepts us through the all-perfect righteousness of Christ; this righteousness is imputed unto us by faith; and the true living faith is a divine grace wrought in the soul by the giver of every good and perfect gift. It is not the result of comparing evidence, and of giving the assent to the strongest arguments: For a man may do this without the least grain of saving faith; but it is, according to *St. Paul, the gift of God*—And in another place he calls it one of *the fruits of the spirit*—And *St. Peter* says, it is *God that purifieth the heart by faith*. He enables the sinner, who finds his want of Christ's righteousness, to seek it, and to lay hold of it: For whoever hungers and thirsts after Christ's righteousness, has a promise that he shall be filled, even filled with peace and joy in believing that this righteousness is imputed unto him, and with the love of God, which is shed abroad in his heart by the holy spirit. And if there be any truth in God or man, this promise is now fulfilled, and every one that enters into our Lord's kingdom finds righteousness and peace and joy in the holy ghost.

Some persons think they can easily evade the force of this reasoning, by suggesting it to be possible, that all this may be a delusion. If a man is not acquainted with the scripture marks of true faith, and is not careful to  
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compare them with his own experience, possibly he may be deluded, and fancy, that God has accepted him, when he has not. But if he sets out deeply convinced of his want of faith, waits for it in the instituted way, in that way receives it, and the effects of true faith follow upon receiving it, then if such a person may be deluded, there is no certainty in the world. The scriptures were written to direct us in these points, and they are so plain, that the way-faring man, though foolish, cannot err therein. They have given us one infallible rule to guide our enquiries, which is to examine the nature of faith by its purifying virtue. Wherever the true faith is, it purifies the heart, cleansing it from the pollution and from the guilt of sin, and destroying also the dominion of sin, so that the believer daily grows in grace, and goes on in his christian course perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

If faith does not work thus in an holy life, it is indeed a delusion. What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and have not works? If he have not a working faith, an active operative grace, purifying the heart from sin, and producing in the clean heart all the fruits of the spirit, he wants the scripture marks of true faith; and let him talk ever so much, and be ever so strongly persuaded of his acceptance with God, he is in a dangerous delusion. It is but a dead thing,

thing, which he supposes to be the living faith : for it is written, *As the body without breath is dead, so faith without works is dead also.* Works are the breath of faith. If it be alive it will breath, as certainly as the living body breaths. If it have no breath, no works to evidence its life, the scripture looks upon it to be a dead carcass ; but if it breaths, and acts, and abounds in every good word and work to the glory of God, and to the service of men, then we may with as much certainty pronounce it to be the true faith, as we can pronounce the body to be alive, when it is able to perform all the offices of its animal life : for as the body while it breaths is alive, so faith while it works is alive also. In this case there can be no delusion : Because we follow the sure rule laid down for our direction, *By their fruits ye shall know them.* How can we mistake the fruits of the spirit for the fruits of the flesh ? Is not every tree known by its own fruit ? Do men ever think of gathering figs of thorns, or grapes of a bramble-bush ? The fruits of grace, and of fallen nature, are as opposite as the two spirits which produce them. The one abounds in the works of the flesh, the other crucifies the flesh with its affections and lusts. The one fills the mind with spiritual pride, envy, and malice, the other begins with humility, and works by love. The one lives in open transgression of

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the laws of God, the other conforms his words and works, and even the thoughts of his heart, to the standard of scripture. Can you see these different fruits, and be at a loss to determine, who is the author of each? Surely we want no evidence to disprove the pretences of an adulterer, a fornicator, an unclean person, and the rest mentioned by the apostle. Their lives speak their want of faith. By their fruits we see that they have not the root of matter within them, because they hold the truth in unrighteousness. They must either have deluded themselves, or else they are downright hypocrites: For it is of the very essence of true faith to destroy sin, and to work in an holy obedience. When we are accepted in the beloved, and faith in his blood has purified our hearts, then we are through his grace both prepared and also able to shew this work of faith in our lives and conversations; and this point comes to be considered under the third head, which was to prove, That Jesus Christ is the foundation of all holy obedience. But this I must leave for the subject of another discourse, and would only observe at present from what has been said, that since Christ is the foundation of all saving knowledge, it is our duty to seek it from him in all the means of grace, and especially in the word: for the commandment is pure, enlightening the eyes. Whoever hears and reads it with humility  
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and prayer, will find the eyes of his understanding enlightened. He will see clearly the things of God, and will see more clearly, than others can, the useful arts and sciences. If he study them under the direction of divine grace, and with a view to the divine glory, the eternal light will shine into his heart, and give him more understanding than his teachers. And since Jesus Christ is the foundation of our acceptance with God the father, let us seek to be accepted through faith, and never think of setting up any righteousness of our own in opposition to his. He is the Lord our righteousness, through whose merits imputed unto us by faith, God will receive us as just and righteous. And may the holy Spirit give you the practical conviction of these two important truths, that you may find the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ, and may through his all-perfect righteousness be presented before God the father without spot of sin unto salvation ; to whom with the son and the holy Spirit, three persons in the unity of the Godhead, be equal glory, worship, and praise, in the church militant and triumphant, now and for ever. Amen.

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# S E R M O N II.



I C O R. iii. II.

*Other foundation can no man lay,  
than that is laid, which is Jesus  
Christ.*



FROM the scope and design of these words, which were opened in a former discourse, it was proposed to consider the following particulars :

*First,* That Jesus Christ is the foundation of all saving knowledge.

*Secondly,* He is the foundation of all acceptance with God the father.

*Thirdly,* He is the foundation of all holy obedience. And,

*Lastly,* He is the foundation of our present and eternal happiness.

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Under the *first* head it was proved, that man's natural ignorance and blindness in the things of God made it necessary he should be enlightened. Jesus Christ came into the world to open the blind eyes, and to be a light to them that sat in darkness. He says of himself, *I am the light of the world, and whosoever believeth in me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* He is as truly the light of the spiritual as the sun is the light of the material world, and whoever seeks to be enlightened with any saving truth, must receive it from the gracious influence of his divine rays. And under the

*Second* head man's natural corruption and actual sinfulness were considered. The holiness, justice, and truth of God could not accept the sinner, while he lay in this state of pollution and guilt, and he could do nothing to deliver himself from it, but must have lived here and for ever separated from God, unless Jesus Christ had obeyed and suffered, died and risen again, to work out that perfect righteousness, through the merits of which imputed unto the sinner by faith, God the father will now accept him, and receive him as just and righteous into his love and into his heaven. From whence it follows by direct consequence, that until he be thus accepted he can do no good works, which comes to be considered under the

*Third* head, viz. that Jesus Christ is the foundation of all holy obedience. Man in

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his natural state cannot perform any holy obedience. He wants both will and power, until his person be accepted through Jesus Christ, and united to him by true and lively faith. The doctrine of our church upon this point is very clear and full. In the 13th article, intituled, *Of works before justification*, she teaches that — “ Works  
 “ done before the grace of Christ, and the  
 “ inspiration of his spirit, are not pleasant  
 “ to God; forasmuch as they spring not  
 “ of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they  
 “ make men meet to receive grace, or (as  
 “ the school authors say) deserve grace of  
 “ congruity: Yea rather for that they are  
 “ not done as God hath willed and com-  
 “ manded them to be done, we doubt not  
 “ but they have the nature of sin.” Our  
 works are not acceptable, until we have the  
 grace of Christ and the inspiration of his spi-  
 rit to render our persons accepted. Nay the  
 very best works we can do, if they be not  
 done, as God hath willed and commanded  
 them to be done, have certainly in them the  
 nature of sin. *We doubt not but they have the  
 nature of sin*, is a very strong expreffion: but  
 our pious reformers could not soften it. They  
 had left the bishop of *Rome* upon account of  
 the doctrine of merit, which the Papists hold,  
 and it is the most dangerous of all their tenets:  
 for hereby they go about to establish their  
 own righteousness, not submitting themselves

to



to the righteousness of God. All the reformers joined in asserting justification by faith only, knowing that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. It is impossible to be more clear and express against the merit of works, than the compilers of our articles and homilies are; they seem to have been guided in their opinion by two principal reasons, both taken from scripture, the first respecting God, the second ourselves.

It is impossible to do any good works well-pleasing to God, until we are accepted in Christ, because our whole nature is sinful—in it dwelleth no good thing, and without the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his spirit no good thing can ever dwell. The scripture declares us to be by nature children of wrath. We became objects of God's wrath, when by the original offence mankind transgressed his holy just and good law. Then his holiness, justice, and goodness became concerned to inflict the threatened punishment, which they did inflict, and to which every son of fallen *Adam* is subject, until he be accepted through Jesus Christ. In this fallen state he is like an attainted rebel, who cannot do any action that is deemed good and valid in law, until his attainder be reversed, and he be restored in blood. This is our very case in spirituals. What can we do, that will be deemed good and valid in  
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the court of heaven, while we are under a state of forfeiture, our persons are guilty, and our whole nature (as our church expresses it) deserves God's wrath and damnation?

And we are still more incapable of doing any acceptable works, if we consider the state we are in by actual transgression. We are under sentence of condemnation for the first offence: for the law is of so pure and spiritual a nature as to reach to the inmost thoughts of the heart. It requires truth in the inward parts, and expects perfect obedience there, as well as in the words and actions. The stile of it is, *Do this, and thou shalt live*. It promises life, but to them only, who never err from its commandments. One single failing cuts us off from the promised life, and puts us under the curse: for it is written, *Cursed is every man who continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law to do them*. Now the same law, which has brought him in guilty before God, cannot acquit him afterwards; because he is already a convict, is sentenced, and under the curse, and he can think of no method of escaping the deserved punishment, but to pay an unerring obedience for the future. Supposing he could do this, yet it would be making no satisfaction; because after one transgression by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified. It is an adjudged case, that partial obedience

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can make no atonement to the law, which required perfect obedience; the equity of this proceeding we acknowledge in our own laws. If a criminal found guilty of murder was to alledge in his defence, that he had broken no other law of the land, that he was not a thief nor an adulterer, &c. would this plea be allowed in court? Would he be acquitted of the murder, because it was not attended with robbery? No. The judge would observe to him, that he came there to be tried for a murder, and that he was found guilty by the law, and as such must be condemned: for he that said, Thou shalt not steal, said also, Thou shalt do no murder. Now if thou commit no robbery, yet if thou kill, thou art a transgressor of the law: for whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all, and is under guilt and condemnation, as if he had offended against the whole law. The law of God is pure and spiritual, and allows of no deviation from it. If it gives life, it must have perfect unerring obedience; where this is wanting in one instance, it cannot take partial obedience as any atonement for disobedience: From whence it follows, that men under the guilt of original and actual sin cannot with respect to God perform any holy obedience. And

With respect to ourselves, there is another reason, which being taken from a matter of fact,



fact, should carry with it full conviction. Our fallen nature is so entirely depraved, that it has neither will nor power to perform any holy obedience. The old man of sin, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, can do nothing but sin. And until he be put off and crucified with all his affections and lusts, we cannot put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness: for we are not only corrupt, but also under the bondage of corruption; not only sinners, but also slaves to sin, sold under sin, and led captive to commit it by the devil at his will. Sin has such an absolute dominion, that although it exercises the most cruel tyranny, yet men have no desire to shake off its yoke. Sin wears away their bodies in its service, and yet they are pleased with their own destruction, and sin on. Whenever the tyrant commands—*Do this*, the natural man doeth it, though it be at the peril of his life. When sin puts him upon a course of uncleanness, which he knows will bring the infirmities of old age upon him before he has come to manhood, or a course of intemperance, which must end in painful and acute distempers, the poor slave submits. And must not sin reign in his mortal body, since he thus obeys it in the lusts thereof? Must it not have absolute dominion over him, since he thus yields his members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, and yields them,

even to work out his own destruction? And when he sees this destruction before his eyes, yet he has no desire to avoid it; we have neither will nor power to deliver ourselves from sin's dominion: Because when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. The soul was enslaved, and without strength to recover its liberty as well as the body. Which of its faculties are free and able to cast off the tyranny of sin? Can this good desire arise first in the imagination? It cannot. The imaginations of the heart of the natural man are evil, and only evil, and that continually. Can it arise in the understanding? It cannot: For it is in darkness. When the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek after God, he found none, no not one—They were wise enough to do evil, but to do good they had no knowledge; neither had they a will to chuse it: for the natural man follows the will of the flesh, which is always contrary to the will of God, and with the heart and affections he serves the law of sin.

Thus the dominion of sin is universal. It commands all the faculties of soul and body, which serve it with a willing and uninterrupted obedience; and from what has been said with respect to God, and with respect to ourselves, it is evident that the natural man is utterly unable to perform any holy obedience.

obedience. This is the plain doctrine of scripture, and it is confirmed by our church in her 10th article, which declares, that “ the  
 “ condition of man after the fall of *Adam* is  
 “ such, that he cannot turn and prepare him-  
 “ self by his own natural strength and good  
 “ works to faith and calling upon God :  
 “ wherefore we have no power to do good  
 “ works, pleasant and acceptable to God,  
 “ without the grace of God by Christ pre-  
 “ venting us, that we may have a good will,  
 “ and working with us, when we have that  
 “ good will.” Both the good will, and the  
 power to work with it come from Christ; and  
 the manner in which he bestows both upon  
 us is thus described in scripture. God the  
 father accepts us as righteous through the  
 merits of Jesus Christ, whereby we are justi-  
 fied; upon which we are united to Christ  
 through faith given us by his holy spirit;  
 and from this union we receive continual sup-  
 plies of grace to enable us to bring forth the  
 fruits of the spirit, which are well-pleasing  
 unto God the father.

This vital union with Christ the head of  
 the body is the principle of divine life in all  
 his members, and it is expressed in scripture  
 by various phrases, which denote the reality  
 and absolute certainty of it, and which can-  
 not admit of a metaphorical sense, such as,  
 “ Christ’s dwelling in us, and we in him,  
 our being rooted and planted into him, and  
 built



built up in him, our being one spirit and one flesh with him, our living and being led by his spirit :” And it is also represented by various images, such as the union between *the head and the body*, what a strange body would it be, which had only a metaphorical union with the head ? between the *bread and the eater*, what sort of a constitution must it be, which could live upon metaphorical bread ? and between the *foundation and the building*, what kind of a building would it be, which should stand upon a metaphorical foundation ? But chiefly between the vine and the branches, which our Lord has largely treated of in *John xv. I am the vine*, says he, *ye are the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : For without me ye can do nothing.* If any man abide in Christ, and bear much fruit to the glory of the father, he must be as truly and as vitally united to Christ, as the branches are to the vine : for he is the root and stock, from whence the branches receive their nourishment, and are enabled to bring forth fruit : And therefore whoever is not united to Christ can have no principle of divine life in him, but is like a branch cut off from the stock and withered, whose end is to be burnt.

From these scriptures it is evident, that we cannot live to God nor bring forth any fruit

fruit unto holiness until we are united to Christ, and have fellowship with him. The spirit of God is the bond of this union: for he gives us the true faith, whereby the soul is enabled to reject every thing, that would separate it from Christ, and to cast away all hope of salvation in its own endeavours and works, and thus placing no merit in any thing it can do, it closes in with the free offer of mercy in Christ Jesus, whom faith has a peculiar fitness to receive, and does actually receive him with all his fulness, as these scriptures testify, *For we have an access, says the apostle, and entrance by faith into that grace of Christ, wherein we stand.* And again, *Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith.* And that most holy faith, whereby Christ dwelleth in us, enables us to live the life of Christ; for by purifying all the faculties of the soul it makes us to be like him, to love his image, and to desire it may be perfectly formed in our souls. And accordingly by the close and intimate union which faith keeps up between Christ and us, we are made conformable to his death and resurrection: for faith draws virtue from his death to destroy the dominion of sin, and from his resurrection to rise to newness of life. Nothing but the influence of the death of Christ, and a real fellowship with it, can free us from sin's dominion. We must be planted together in the likeness of his death, if we ever get any mortifying power over the body  
of

of sin. And we must be also planted into the likeness of his resurrection, that we who are by nature dead in trespasses and sins may be quickened in Christ, and made alive in him. St. *Paul* had happy experience of this doctrine—*I am crucified*, says he, *with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the son of God.* And whoever is crucified with Christ in the same manner, has the body of sin destroyed, that henceforth he should not serve sin, and whoever liveth by the same faith in the son of God, has continual supplies of grace from Jesus Christ to enable him to live a life of holiness unto God.

This is the scripture doctrine of holy obedience. We are therein taught, that God must work in us whatever is well-pleasing to him. St. *Paul* prays thus for his *Hebrews* :  
 “ Now the God of peace make you perfect  
 “ in every good work to do his will, working  
 “ in you that which is well-pleasing in his  
 “ sight through Jesus Christ :” who came in the flesh to destroy in us ungodliness and worldly lusts, that we might be fit to perform holy obedience. “ The great God and  
 “ our Saviour Jesus Christ, says he, gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from  
 “ all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”  
 And again another scripture saith—“ We are  
 “ created



“ created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”  
 When we are made new creatures in him,  
 then have we a new nature with new affec-  
 tions, which delight to obey the will of God  
 as much as the old sinful nature hated it : For  
 if any man be in Christ he is a new creature,  
 old things are passed away, behold all things  
 are become new. He is renewed through-  
 out, in body, soul, and spirit. The body,  
 which sin enslaved and defiled, is cleansed by  
 the blood of Christ, and consecrated by his  
 spirit for an holy temple to the living God.  
 The soul is enriched with the divine graces  
 of faith, and hope and love, which work up-  
 on all the faculties, restraining the imagina-  
 tion, enlightening the understanding, regu-  
 lating the will, and turning the heart and  
 affections to God ; and then renewing the  
 spirit day by day with the sweet and holy  
 tempers of the blessed Jesus, that the whole  
 man may grow up to the measure of the sta-  
 ture of the fulness of Christ. Nothing avail-  
 eth in Christ Jesus but this new creature.  
 God the father will accept of no obedience,  
 unless it be the work of this new nature. Our  
 best duties and services are displeasing to him,  
 unless we be renewed by faith in the spirit of  
 the mind, as our church has clearly deter-  
 mined in her 12th article. “ Albeit that  
 “ good works, which are the fruits of faith,  
 “ and follow after (don’t go before) justifi-  
 “ cation, cannot put away our sins, and en-  
 H “ dure

“dure the severity of God’s judgment, yet  
 “are they pleasing and acceptable to God *in*  
 “Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a  
 “true and lively faith, insomuch that by  
 “them a lively faith may be as evidently  
 “known, as a tree discerned by the fruit.”

From these authorities it is evident, that Jesus Christ is the foundation of all holy obedience. Until you be accepted in him, you can do no good works; nay, without him you can do nothing. The scripture and our articles and homilies speak full to this point, and they entirely overthrow the destructive doctrine of the *Papists* and *Socinians*, who agree in maintaining the merit of works. Every true son of our church has renounced their heresies. The scripture has assured him, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; but he finds the sinfulness of his nature reigning in many unholy tempers, and breaking out into many offences, against which he strives, but not in his own strength: for he is convinced, that his soul is by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and that all his striving can no more give it spiritual life, than rubbing and chafing a dead carcass can restore to it animal life, and therefore he does not seek to attain holiness, while his nature continues corrupt and dead in sin. The gospel method is directly contrary. It first cleanses the heart, from whence are the issues of life, and then the streams will certainly  
 run

run pure : It directs you to labour first to be reconciled unto God, that you may be accepted through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and justified by his merits, and then you will have a new nature inclined to holiness, and endued by the holy spirit with power to seek and to attain it. After you have received justification to life, you may go on with the work of sanctification : for by justification your nature is regenerate and new-born, and sanctification is the proper work of this regenerate nature, as it brings all its parts and faculties into use, whereby they improve and grow in strength. Justification, which is the new birth of the soul, is like the first birth of the infant into this world. When it is born, it has all the parts of the body perfect ; no new ones are added afterwards, only these grow in size and strength, until they reach to the stature of a man, as the graces grow in the justified soul until it arrive to a perfect man in Christ. And then God who has been glorified by it upon earth, will receive it into his eternal glory through Jesus Christ our Lord—

Who is the foundation of our present and eternal happiness, as I purposed in the *fourth* and last place to consider. This is a direct consequence from what has been said, and does not require many words to illustrate it : For since the sinner has no saving knowledge, until Christ enlighten him ; since God the



father will not accept his person, but through the righteousness of Christ, nor his works, but as done in Christ, and flowing from living faith in him, then it is certain that whatever happiness he enjoys must be derived from the Lord and giver of grace and glory. He can merit none, for when he has done all these things that are commanded him, which yet no man has done, he was even then to say, I am an unprofitable servant, I have done that which was my duty to do, and therefore I cannot deserve present and much less eternal happiness from the hand of God.

By present happiness I mean those comforts of the gospel which I have been describing, and which the heavenly comforter administers to the sinner, when he is enlightened with saving truth, when he is convinced of his reconciliation with God the father, and satisfied that the divine holiness, justice, and truth, are no longer his enemies, but will now make all things work together for his good; and when he is assured of the truth of his reconciliation, as well from the inward witness of the spirit of God with his spirit, as from the holy obedience in which he now delights, and which he has power to perform. This happy soul enjoys the comforts of present salvation, which are daily strengthened in it more and more, as it grows in grace, and bears fairer and richer fruits of holiness: for  
this

this growth in grace is an evident proof of our acceptance with God, and a fruitful source of spiritual comfort : when we find ourselves renewed in the spirit of our minds, and are pleased with the will of God in the inner man, and are enabled to run chearfully in the way of God's commandments, the happiness arising from hence can no more be described than the joys of heaven. If you would know what blessings, love, joy, peace, and the other fruits of the spirit bring to the soul, taste and see how gracious the Lord is. And whenever he gives you the experience of them, you will then find that in them heaven is already begun in the soul ; and if by believing we can rejoice at present with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, what must our joy be when we receive the end of our faith, even the eternal salvation of our souls. When Jesus Christ admits us into his kingdom, and bestows upon us all his spiritual blessings in heavenly places, what happiness we shall then feel, tongue cannot utter, nor can heart conceive. And inconceivably great though it be, yet it is all the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, " for he " hath given us eternal life, and this life is " in his son :"—And faith is the hand by which we receive it ; " for he that believeth " on me, saith the blessed Jesus, hath everlasting life." He purchased it for us. We could not attain it by any of our own works,  
nor

nor could the highest angel in heaven merit it for one of the sons of men. It was bought for us by an inestimable price, by the obedience and sufferings of the God-man Christ Jesus, and he therefore obeyed and suffered, died and rose again, that we might be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. He acted as our representative, by which means we have an interest in all that he did and suffered. He resisted the tempter, obeyed the law, suffered the punishment due to the transgression of it, even unto death, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sat down on the throne of glory, as the head and representative of all the elect people of God. In all these things he acted as the head of the body the church; and we commonly say, a person is crowned, when the crown is put upon his head. Now our head is already crowned, and therefore so long as he possesses his glory, we his members shall possess ours, and shall share in the glories of our heavenly king. What these eternal glories are, it surpasseth all understanding to comprehend. The scripture has revealed them to us chiefly in negative descriptions. It removes from them that imperfection to which all sublunary good is subject. It calls them *riches*, but then they are not subject to rust and moth, nor can thieves break in to rob us of them. It compares them to an *inheritance*, but then it is always in peace,

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no armies can lay it waste, no irregular passion can interrupt the happy enjoyment of it: And there can be no fear of losing it, because all tears are wiped away from every eye; and upon every head there is placed a crown of glory, which is *incorruptible*, has no principles of dissolution, and therefore no defect in it, is *undefiled*, has no stain of sin or infirmity under it, and *fadeth not away*, all human glory like a flower of the field withers and dies, but this is always flourishing, and blooms in never-fading spring. Thus the scripture removes every thing from our heavenly happiness, which renders our present enjoyments imperfect; and then to make the description full, puts eternity to it. And yet even of this eternal happiness we have but faint ideas; we know it at present but in part. We shall know it better when our almighty Saviour bestows it upon us. When he admits us into his presence, receives us into his heaven, and places the never-fading crown of glory upon our heads, then we shall feel what an eternal weight of glory is. Then we shall enjoy that beatific vision, without which heaven would not be desireable, and we shall see the Lord Jesus face to face, and shall know that he is above all blessing and praise. We know indeed at present that he is God over all blessed for ever, but the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind,

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so that our knowledge and our praises are imperfect. But then we shall be free from this earthly clog, and shall see more of his excellencies, and shall be more able to praise them. We shall continually find new beauties, new worlds of delight in him; for his perfections being infinite will afford us fresh subject of praise to eternity. And our interest in them being an act of his free grace, will render them to us more precious, and the contemplation of them more sweet. Every new day of glory (if I may so speak, when time is no more) will bring us more in debt to his free grace. The holding of glory shall be free grace without end; so that Christ's relation of creditor, and ours of debtor, shall grow and be greater for ever. Redeemed sinners can never say, Now our tribute of praise to Jesus is fully paid, because they will be always contracting new debts, and while they stand confirmed in bliss, the more broken debtors will they be. The longer they enjoy the glory of heaven through millions of ages, the debt to the lamb that purchased it for them by his blood will grow infinitely. Praises to eternity can take nothing from the debt; for the debt increases, while they are praising. And let the innumerable company of angels join the spirits of just men made perfect: Let them raise their hearts and voices to the highest strains of praise, they would still fall short of the greatness

ness of his merits. O holy spirit! now give us a heart and a tongue to join our imperfect praises with theirs. With them we ascribe salvation to the Lord God omnipotent. Blessing, and honour, and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb for ever.

I shall here finish the doctrinal parts of this discourse, but I cannot conclude without making a short application. Every useful doctrine may be reduced to practice; and all the christian doctrines have a direct tendency to operate in our lives, and to produce their proper effects in our conversations. We have been considering some of the excellencies of God our Saviour, which are not mere speculative points; because he was made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. He is our all-wise prophet to enlighten the blindness of our understanding, and to teach us saving knowledge. He is our all-meritorious priest, through the merits of whose perfect sacrifice the pollution and the guilt of our sins are taken away, and we are accepted as righteous before God the father. And he is our almighty king, by whose grace the dominion of sin is destroyed in us, and we are enabled to perform an holy obedience. "Jesus Christ is all and in all: for we are complete in him." Salvation from first to last, from the first ray of light which broke into  

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our dark and sinful souls, until we see Christ in the fulness of glory, is all his work, and to him must the honour of it be ascribed. He is the foundation on whom it all stands: for *other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

Men, brethren, and fathers, suffer the word of exhortation. You profess, that Jesus Christ is the foundation of all saving knowledge: Do you then seek it from him in the study of his holy word, and through the blessing of his good Spirit upon your studies? Or are any of you seeking it from the unscriptural unnatural light of nature, from that nature which is totally dark and blind, until the abstracted metaphysician has stolen some great truths from the revealed word, and then boasts that he was self-enlightened, and that they were self-irradiated upon his own mind by a more mysterious and enthusiastic light, than the maddest *Quaker* ever pretended to. In their metaphysical reveries, let them talk of their light of nature; yet if God may be heard, nature is in darkness. It is blind in the things of God; nay more, until it be renewed, it cannot see and know them. To whom then would you go for the knowledge of them? To Christ, as held forth in his word, and applied by his Spirit, or rather to human learning and its arts and sciences? God forbid. They have not one ray of their own to give. Their boasted lustre is but a  
borrowed

borrowed light. Blot the sun out of heaven, and these bright stars are at once in the blackness of darkness: for there is but one created sun to enlighten this material world, as there is but one uncreated sun to enlighten the spiritual world here in grace, and for ever in glory. When the arts and sciences keep their proper station, reflecting the light cast upon them by the sun of righteousness, then the study of them is sanctified, and they are highly useful in the school of Christ; but unsanctified, they only tend to puff up and to feed the pride of corrupt nature. Let this be an answer to the adversary, who may object, that I am a decrifier of human learning. When it is preferred to divine, I do decry it, but in no other respect. Am I an enemy to light, because I prefer the all-reviving light of the sun to the faint glimmering light of the stars? Christ is the sun of righteousness, the light of the spiritual world. Let it then be your first and principal study to attain from him divine learning, and in subordination to it seek human learning. Let God be your teacher in the things of God. Read his word, as he who was wiser than his teachers did, day and night; but read it with humility, and always begin with the excellent prayer before mentioned, "Lord open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things in thy law:" The Lord will open them, and you will not only see spiritual truths clearly, but will also be

more diligent in the study of useful knowledge, and will attain more of it, than a man of the best parts trusting to the mere strength of genius can ever attain. And one great truth the word and the spirit of God will certainly manifest to you, and that is,

*Secondly*, The manner of your acceptance. To a sinner convinced of the corruption of his nature, and of the transgressions of his life, nothing can be more interesting than to know, whether God's justice and holiness and truth can pardon him. The fancied light of fallen nature cannot teach him this. It never did. It never led one learned heathen, *Greek* or *Roman*, to Jesus Christ. It never can: Because it is blind, and with the aid of all the sciences blind it remains, until Christ by his word and spirit open its eyes. Then it sees, that his righteousness imputed to it by faith is the only method of being accepted as righteous before God the father. Are you then seeking to be accepted in the righteousness of the beloved? Or are you trying to work out some righteousness of your own, which altogether or in part may render you accepted? It must never be forgotten, that justification by faith only is the grand Protestant doctrine. Justification by works is downright Popery. We separated from the bishop of *Rome*, because he set up the merit of works in opposition to the righteousness of God. And lo! Protestant divines have fallen back again into the  
sink



sink of Popery, maintaining the merit of works; as every man must do, who talks of the dignity and rectitude of human nature, of the dignity of sinful nature, and of the rectitude of fallen nature, of natural religion, of the moral sense and of the moral scheme, and of the fitness and relation of things: for these systems are big with contradictions, unless man be able of himself to discover and to practice such duties as will render him acceptable to God. And indeed metaphysical writers have ascribed to blind fallen nature both this will and power, maintaining that "every one may find within himself the rule of right, and obligations to follow it." Bishop *Butler's* Sermons, p. 32. But what saith the scripture? Positively and expressly it speaks of man's having neither will nor power, unless they be given him of God. Being sinful in heart and life he lies under sentence of condemnation by the just law of heaven, and like an attainted rebel he cannot do a legal act, until he be pardoned. Jesus Christ is the foundation of this pardon; and until we are accepted through his righteousness, our best works have in them the nature of sin. This is scripture, and the doctrine of our church. And can you believe a man to be a friend to either, who wants to establish the merit of works? Can he be a sound Protestant, or a good church of England-man? No, he cannot. Certainly,

tainly, my brethren, you would condemn him with one voice. Away then with all the metaphysical rubbish, which has long obscured the scripture doctrine of acceptance: for the love of the Lord Jesus, and of his flock for whom he shed his blood, let us hear no more of the religion of nature—of that religion which finds us and leaves us children of wrath: for the sake of your own present and eternal peace let all metaphysical systems of the religion of nature be no more your favourite studies. You have the holy scripture in your hands; whither would you go, but to it for the words of eternal life? And does not it teach you, that Jesus Christ came into the world to redeem us from the miseries of our fallen nature? And whose cause then are these men defending, who want to establish a religion founded on that nature, from which Christ came to redeem us? Good God! what an attempt is this, for christian men, christian ministers, embassadors of Jesus Christ, not only to preach up the religion of nature, as if nature was not fallen, but also to make this religion of nature the foundation of revealed. What a monstrous paradox is this, *natural religion the foundation of revealed*? Is not this taking away Jesus Christ the sure foundation, which God hath laid, and putting the religion of nature under him as a foundation to bear him up, and thus trying to lay another foundation, which

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if God be true no man can lay. The folly, the guilt, and the danger of this proceeding are so evident upon the principles before laid down, that I shall not urge the matter farther at present, only if there be here any admirers of this metaphysical and unnatural religion, it may be useful to them to consider, what this religion can do for them, even as they understand it, which the religion of the bible has not promised to do for them in a more full and ample manner, especially with respect to their performing an holy obedience, of which Jesus Christ is the sole foundation, which is the *third* inference from what has been said.

Until you are accepted in Christ you cannot do any good works: because your whole nature is corrupt, and nothing but corrupt fruit can grow upon it. Are you then seeking for an holy nature, that in it you may perform an holy obedience? Are you then praying to God to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that his will may become yours, his word your study and delight, his Spirit your guide? And is it the desire of your soul, that you may be enabled to run cheerfully in the way of God's commandments unto the end? Is Christ the foundation of this great work? And are you convinced you want grace from him every moment to carry it on? Then bring this conviction into practice.



tice. Let it operate in your lives. Where would you seek his grace, but in the means of grace? And when your persons are accepted through the righteousness of Christ imputed to you by faith, then God will accept your attendance upon these means, but not before. Then he will be found of you in them, will give his blessing to the use of them, and will enable you to abound in every good word and work to the praise of his glory. The scripture is exprefs, that we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. We can bear no fruit until we be grafted into him the true vine. Our church is exceeding clear upon this head. To their authorities we must submit, and we shall find the happy effects of embracing them, if they dispose us to seek, until God gives us a new nature, with new faculties and affections, and enables us to bring forth much fruit to the praise of the glory of his free grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: for then we shall find the present comforts of the gospel sweetly drawing us on in the way of duty, until we be at last presented perfect in Christ Jesus. Perfect and complete in him, but not in our own righteousness, we shall be presented before God the father without spot of sin to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.

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To these truths every christian assents. He lays no other foundation for his present and eternal happiness than Jesus Christ, and he is a sure foundation: for he is the author and finisher of the faith, the author to begin it here in grace, the finisher to end it, when faith shall be swallowed up in vision. As he is the author of all the works of creation, so is he the author of all the works of redemption, by whom they begin, through whom they are carried on, and in whom they will be completed: "For I am alpha and "omega, says he, the first and the last, "which was, which is, and which is to "come the almighty." He is the Lord God omnipotent, by whom all things were made; by his over-ruling providence they are supported: for he upholdeth all things by the word of his power. He is the most blessed God and Saviour in the offices, of a prophet to enlighten our blind eyes and to be our wisdom, of a priest to atone for the pollution and the guilt of our sins, and to be our righteousness, and of a king to destroy in us the dominion of sin, and to be our sanctification. And he is God the sovereign judge, before whose awful tribunal we must all soon appear. View Jesus Christ in these exalted stations, where he sits far above all principalities and powers, as the first and last in the works of creation, providence, redemption, and final judgment, and then see whether

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you can exalt him high enough. Is not this almighty God and King far above all blessing and praise? You cannot sufficiently extol the works of creation. Survey them with a philosopher's eye, and they will appear great and wonderful in wisdom and power, affording an unexhausted subject of praise. And how then shall we be able to magnify their maker, who is great above all his works? Especially great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God almighty, in the redemption of a sinful world: For when you glorify the Lord Jesus for this inestimable mercy, exalt him as much as you can, for even yet will he far exceed, and when you exalt him, put forth all your strength and be not weary: for you can never go far enough. How should we upon earth go far enough, when the glorified spirits, who try to exalt him as much as they are able, yet fall short? He will always, to eternity he will, be above all blessing and praise. The thousands, thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, who are now standing round his throne, admiring his perfections, and singing the song of *Moses* and the lamb, when they put forth all their strength and are not weary, still they can never go far enough. And when all the sons of God who shouted for joy at the first creation shall again join their voices upon the number of the elects being perfected, still he will far exceed their most exalted song.

Angels



Angels and men with their highest strains of praise cannot come up to the greatness of our Lord's merit. Let the heavenly song be continued through millions of ages, yet the God whom they celebrate is infinite, and their praise therefore must fall short of the subject. The perfection of the almighty creator, and the love of the all-merciful redeemer, are to the redeemed of the Lord subjects which eternity cannot exhaust. O that it may be your happiness and mine to lay Jesus Christ and him only, for the foundation of all saving knowledge, of all acceptance with the father, and of all holy obedience, that having spent our time here by the strength of his grace in his service and to his glory, we may be admitted to see his perfections, and to be happy in the enjoyment of them, and may join our grateful hearts and voices with the blessed company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, in singing the eternal hymn of thanks and praise. So be it, Lord Jesus, to the honour of the father, and to the glory of the eternal spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, whom the church militant now worships, and the church triumphant praises for ever and ever. Amen.

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In a Treatise, intituled *The Flower of Godly Prayers*, written by the Rev. Mr. *Thomas Becon*, and printed in the Year 1563, there is

## A Prayer for FAITH,

Which breaths the very Spirit of the Apostles Doctrine, and which I lay before the Reader, that he may pray for the Comforts of it in the devout Words of this holy Man.

WE are taught by thy holy apostle, O most loving Saviour, that whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and that it is impossible to please thee without faith. And therefore they that come unto thee must believe that thou art God, yea, and such a God as is both able and also will abundantly reward all them that with true faith seek thee. For thy eyes, O Lord, look upon faith, and thou dost appear and shew thyself unto them that have faith in thee: yea through faith, thou being the king of glory, art married to the souls of the faithful, and makest them  
partakers



partakers of thy divine nature, through the wonderful working of thy blessed spirit. Through faith so many as believe are justified, made the sons and heirs of God, and have everlasting life. By faith we obtain of God all good things, even whatsoever we ask in thy name. Seeing that faith is so precious a jewel in thy sight, that without it nothing is acceptable unto thy divine majesty; and we of our own nature cannot have this most singular treasure except thou givest it unto us from above, and doest breath it into our hearts by thy holy spirit: for we of ourselves are blind, ignorant, foolish, and by no means can perceive the things that pertain to the spirit of God, we most heartily beseech thee to take away from us all infidelity and unfaithfulness, which we received of old *Adam*, and to plant in us true faith and undoubted belief, that we may be thoroughly persuaded that thou art the son of the living God, very God and very man, our alone sweet-smelling sacrifice, our alone mediator, advocate, and intercessor, our alone wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, by whom alone, and for whose sake only, thy heavenly father is well pleased with us, our sins are remitted, grace and everlasting life are freely given unto us. O Lord God, suffer us not to lean to our own wisdom, nor to believe, as blind flesh fancieth, nor to seek salvation where superstition dreameth;

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dreameth; but let our faith only be grounded on thy word, and give us grace truly to believe in thee with all our heart, to put our trust in thee, to look for all good things of thee, to call upon thy blessed name in adversity, and with joyful voices and more merry hearts, to praise and magnify it in prosperity. Suffer us not to doubt neither of God thy heavenly father, nor of thee, God his son, nor of God the holy ghost, but earnestly to believe that you being the distinct persons in the Deity, are notwithstanding one very God, besides whom there is no God, neither in heaven nor in earth. Grant also that we may assuredly believe whatsoever is contained in the holy scriptures, and by no means suffer ourselves to be plucked from the verity thereof, but mainly and steadfastly abide in the same even unto death, rage world, roar devil. And this faith, O sweet Jesu, increase thou daily in us more and more, that at the last through thy goodness we may be made perfect and strong men in thy holy religion, and shew ourselves both before thee and the world truly faithful, by bringing forth plenty of good works unto the glory and honour of thy name: which with God the father, and God the holy ghost, livest and reignest true God worlds without end. Amen.

partakers of thy divine nature, through the wonderful working of thy blessed spirit. Through faith so many as believe are justified, made the sons and heirs of God, and have everlasting life. By faith we obtain of God all good things, even whatsoever we ask in thy name. Seeing that faith is so precious a jewel in thy sight, that without it nothing is acceptable unto thy divine majesty; and we of our own nature cannot have this most singular treasure except thou givest it unto us from above, and doest breath it into our hearts by thy holy spirit: for we of ourselves are blind, ignorant, foolish, and by no means can perceive the things that pertain to the spirit of God, we most heartily beseech thee to take away from us all infidelity and unfaithfulness, which we received of old *Adam*, and to plant in us true faith and undoubted belief, that we may be thoroughly persuaded that thou art the son of the living God, very God and very man, our alone sweet-smelling sacrifice, our alone mediator, advocate, and intercessor, our alone wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, by whom alone, and for whose sake only, thy heavenly father is well pleased with us, our sins are remitted, grace and everlasting life are freely given unto us. O Lord God, suffer us not to lean to our own wisdom, nor to believe, as blind flesh fancieth, nor to seek salvation where superstition dreameth;



dreameth; but let our faith only be grounded on thy word, and give us grace truly to believe in thee with all our heart, to put our trust in thee, to look for all good things of thee, to call upon thy blessed name in adversity, and with joyful voices and more merry hearts, to praise and magnify it in prosperity. Suffer us not to doubt neither of God thy heavenly father, nor of thee, God his son, nor of God the holy ghost, but earnestly to believe that you being the distinct persons in the Deity, are notwithstanding one very God, besides whom there is no God, neither in heaven nor in earth. Grant also that we may assuredly believe whatsoever is contained in the holy scriptures, and by no means suffer ourselves to be plucked from the verity thereof, but mainly and steadfastly abide in the same even unto death, rage world, roar devil. And this faith, O sweet Jesu, increase thou daily in us more and more, that at the last through thy goodness we may be made perfect and strong men in thy holy religion, and shew ourselves both before thee and the world truly faithful, by bringing forth plenty of good works unto the glory and honour of thy name: which with God the father, and God the holy ghost, livest and reignest true God worlds without end. Amen.

F I N I S.

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*[The page contains faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.]*



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